



**Testimony of Stephen J. Pasierb, President and CEO  
The Partnership for a Drug-Free America®**

**Hearing on Drug Prevention Programs and the FY 2006 Drug Control Budget  
House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & Human Resources**

**The Honorable Mark E. Souder, Chairman  
The Honorable Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member**

**United States House of Representatives, April 26, 2005**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cummings, members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I'm Steve Pasierb, president and CEO of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

Before I offer my brief comments, I want to thank this subcommittee – and especially you, Mr. Chairman and you, Mr. Cummings – for your unyielding commitment to the drug issue. You are among a handful of remarkable leaders who, year in and year out, remain steadfast in your focus on helping the country contend with the issue of substance abuse. Your leadership not only benefits your constituents in Indiana and Maryland, but all of us. And I have no doubt that your leadership and hard work has contributed to the progress we've made in recent years in reducing the number of teenagers who use illicit drugs in our nation. All of us who work in prevention, law enforcement and treatment are grateful for the work of this subcommittee, and especially to both of you.

The Partnership, as you know, is a non-profit coalition of volunteers from the communications industry. Founded in 1986 by the American Association of Advertising Agencies and with major, on-going core support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Partnership is best known for its research-based communications campaigns. Independent research documents the effectiveness of the Partnership's campaigns, not only in changing consumer attitudes about drugs, but in changing behavior as well. The story behind the Partnership is a story of extraordinary volunteerism, Mr. Chairman. Thousands of communications professionals – from the advertising and media industries; from research, production and public relations; from the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists – give of their time, talent and resources to create our education campaigns. It's a story of exceptionally skilled

professionals using their expertise to benefit the country. Those who contribute to the Partnership do so for one simple reason: To make a difference in the lives of our fellow citizens.

Since 1998, the Partnership has served as the primary creative partner on the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign (commonly referred to as “the media campaign”). As you know, the media campaign is coordinated by our colleagues at the Office of National Drug Control Policy. As you will surely recall, the Congress authorized the media campaign knowing that the private sector, working through the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, had agreed to contribute its expertise in advertising and marketing to this first-of-its-kind effort. I am happy and proud to report, Mr. Chairman, that the private sector has delivered on this commitment. To date, the private sector, through the Partnership, has contributed approximately \$125 million in advertising campaigns and services to the media campaign. And the good news is this: That commitment remains strong. Advertising agencies, through the Partnership, are lined up and ready to produce effective communications campaigns for this effort.

While I have been invited to testify on the proposed drug budget for the coming fiscal year, I will focus my testimony on the insufficient level of funding proposed for the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and on the efficiency and effectiveness of reducing demand for illicit drugs. I must say, for the record, that drug-prevention efforts work best through strategic coordination involving many organizations. For example, we have worked with the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Demand Reduction Unit for many years. Recently, we collaborated on a campaign targeting methamphetamine and Ecstasy in two U.S. cities – St. Louis, Missouri and Phoenix, Arizona. The DEA’s knowledge of each city and the drug problems in these regions were incredibly valuable in our efforts. Participation of DEA’s Demand Reduction Officers played an instrumental role in helping us make these particular efforts successful.

The president’s budget has requested \$120 million for the media campaign for fiscal year 2006, the same amount allotted to the campaign by the Congress for this fiscal year (FY ’05). This is down from \$145 million in fiscal year 2005 and a far cry from the \$195 million appropriated for the media campaign in 1998. Congress appropriated \$195 million in 1998 so that the campaign could achieve very specific objectives, in terms of the campaign’s reach and frequency. It is important to note, Mr. Chairman, that the campaign is operating with much less today in an environment in which media costs (broadcast time, print space, etc.) far exceed what they were in 1998. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, every cut to this campaign translates into a “double cut in exposure,” if you will. For example, last year’s budget for the media campaign was cut by \$25 million. This actually results in a cut in media exposure of \$50 million, when you consider that by reducing the media campaign’s buying power, the media’s campaign’s “match” component also suffers as well.

**To remain effective, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign requires a sustained investment, not cuts in its operating budget.** In the commercial marketplace, when marketing campaigns are producing solid results, brand and product managers invest more – not less – to

sustain and drive increased results. Mr. Chairman, the Congress would be well served to consider these private sector practices as this relates to the media campaign.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is advocating that, minimally, the media campaign's funding level for FY '06 be restored to FY' 05 levels of \$145 million. We advocate for this, Mr. Chairman, as public servants to this program. (As you know, we currently receive no funding for our role in the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.) We do so, Mr. Chairman, because we believe this program is delivering an excellent return on investments by producing solid results. We believe this program – the largest, federally-funded demand-reduction effort currently operating – is an essential component of the country's overall effort to combat the drug problem. Without sufficient funding for the media campaign, I believe that we will, over the short term, forfeit hard-won progress that has been achieved in recent years.

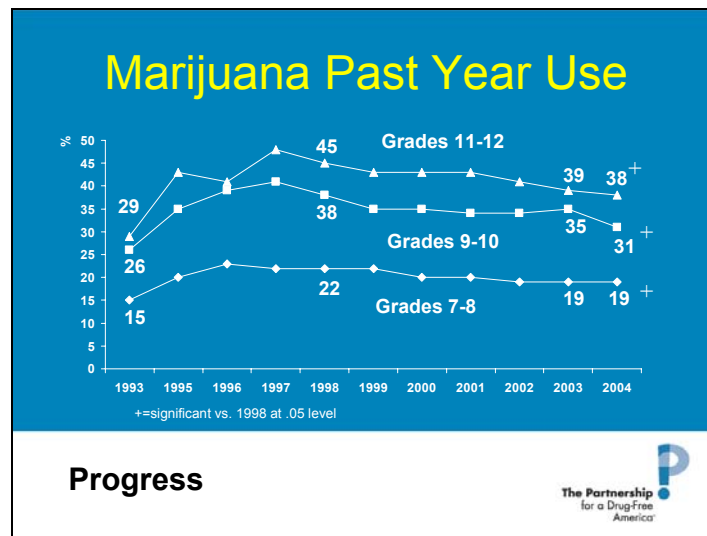
General Arthur Dean, chairman and CEO of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, has described the importance of the media campaign this way: The media campaign, General Dean has said, is the “strategic air cover” for all anti-drug efforts in the country. General Dean's analogy is exactly right: The media campaign not only has a direct impact on changing attitudes and behaviors of its target audiences, but it also strengthens all local anti-drug efforts, especially those driven by local coalitions. The media campaign strengthens other grassroots anti-drug efforts as well – those led by community groups and churches, by civic organizations and school districts. And surely, the messages deployed in this media campaign actually help families address the issue of substance abuse. Evidence of the contributions made by the media campaign are measured in improving anti-drug attitudes and reduced drug use, as tracked in the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study and Monitoring the Future.

Allow me to offer evidence of the effectiveness of the media campaign, in the following points and charts. The data cited below are drawn from the 2004 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATs). This is the 17th year we've conducted this valuable research; this body of data form the largest on-going tracking study on drug-related attitudes and drug use in the country. Last year, we sampled over 7,300 teenagers, in grades 7 through 12, across the country; we also over-sampled for African- and Hispanic-Americans to ensure accurate representations of these constituents. Our findings in PATs track consistently with those of the Monitoring the Future study, conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research under grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

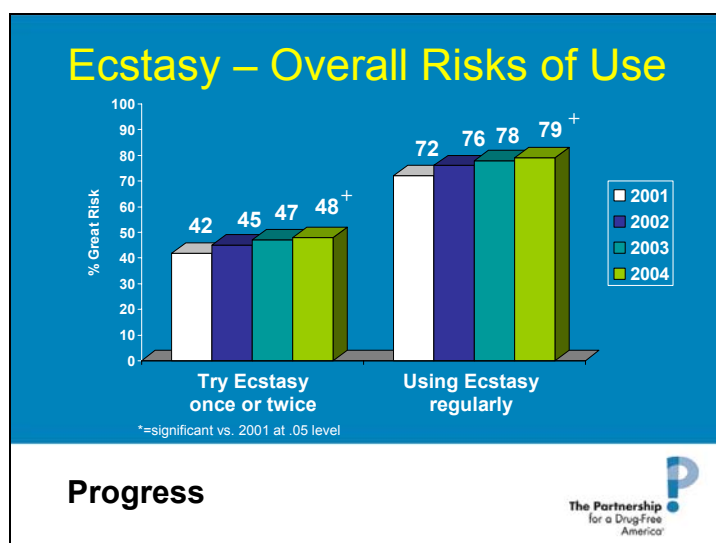
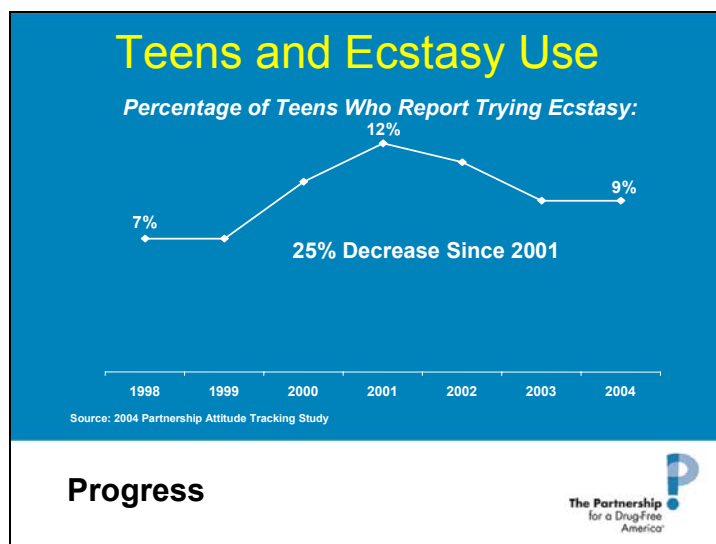
The latest data from our PATs survey report the following:

- **Significantly fewer teenagers are using marijuana today when compared to 1998, the year the media campaign launched.** Reductions are evident in all measured categories of prevalence – lifetime, past year and past month. Marijuana-related attitudes among teenagers have improved significantly over the same time. As you surely know, the media campaign

focuses heavily on preventing adolescent use of marijuana – the most widely abused of all illicit substances.

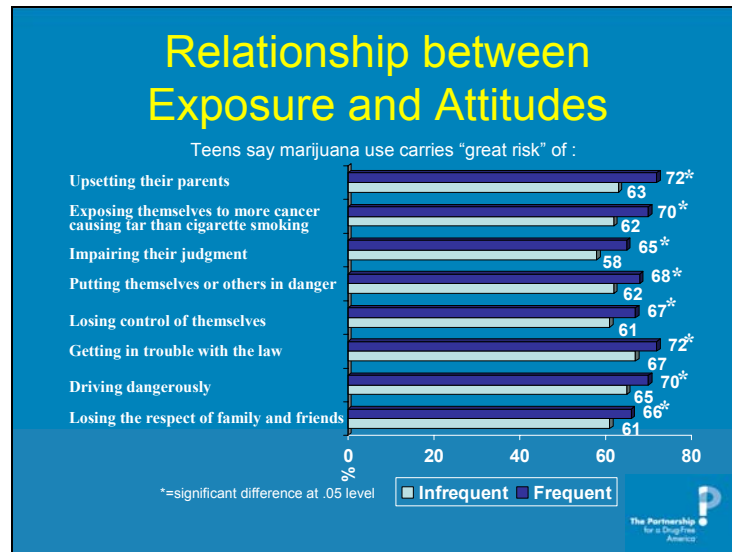


- **Significantly fewer teenagers are using MDMA, or Ecstasy.** In fact, the data report a 25 percent decline in the number of teens using this dangerous drug since it peaked in 2001. The Partnership launched the first national campaign targeting Ecstasy in February of 2002, immediately after the experimentation rates had hit 12 percent among teens. Our anti-Ecstasy messages received additional and widespread distribution through the media campaign's match component. While we still have too many teenagers experimenting with this drug on an annual basis, our collective efforts to reduce demand for Ecstasy have produced excellent results in the short-term. Again, attitudes are the key determinant. Our PATS data report increases in teens who associate risk with MDMA.



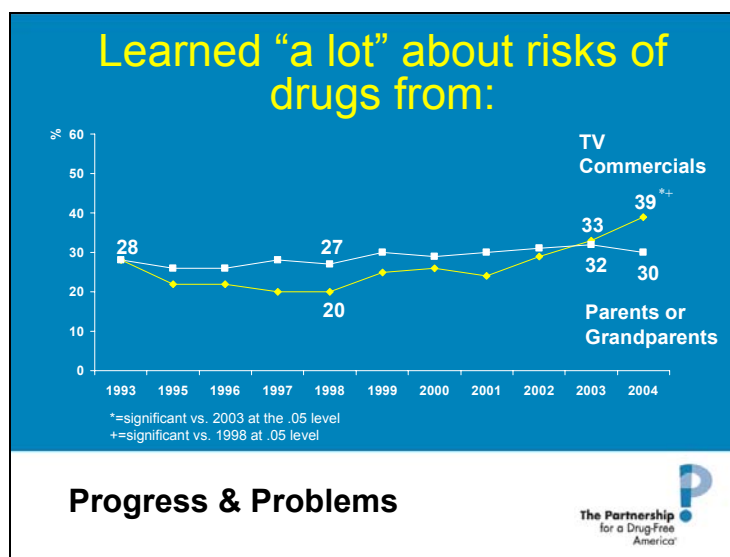
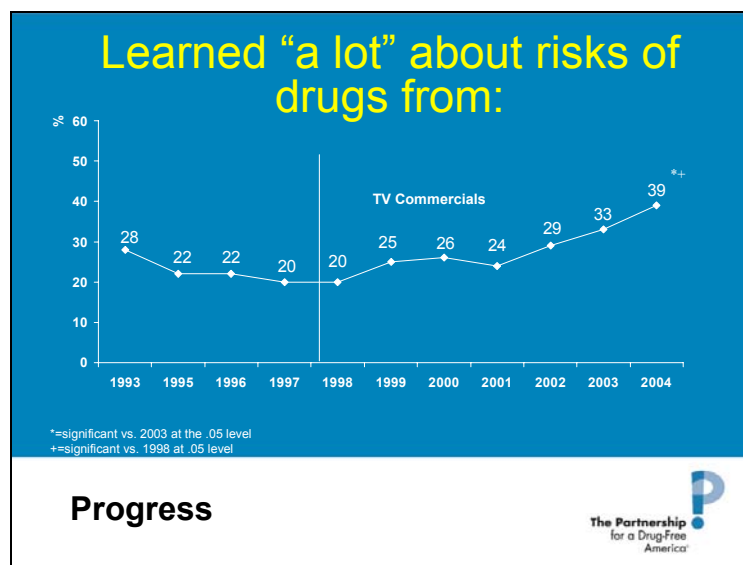
PATS data continue to report strong correlations between heavy exposure to media campaign advertising and low drug use / stronger anti-drug attitudes among teenagers.

In 2003, Roper Public Affairs and Media, formerly RoperASW, reported that teens exposed frequently to anti-drug ads were far more likely to have stronger anti-drug attitudes and up to 38 percent less likely to use drugs. “There is a clear correlation between exposure to anti-drug ads and the decisions teens make regarding drugs,” said Ed Keller, CEO of Roper Public Affairs and Media. “With a relationship this strong, it’s evident that working to boost the number of teens who see or hear anti-drug messages on a daily basis can help drive down drug use.”



Roper Public Affairs and Media (RPA&M), a leading global marketing research and consulting firm, collected and analyzed the data used in the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study. RPA&M found that compared to teens who see or hear anti-drug ads less than once a week, teens who get a daily exposure to such messages were:

- 38% less likely to have tried methamphetamine (8% vs. 13%)
  - 31% less likely to have tried crack/cocaine (9% vs. 13%)
  - 29% less likely to have tried Ecstasy (10% vs. 14%)
  - 14% less likely to have tried marijuana (38% vs. 44%)
  - 8% less likely to have tried any illicit drug
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- **The number of teenagers reporting learning a lot about the risks of drugs from television commercials has increased steadily since the launch of the media campaign in 1998.** This demonstrates the importance of the media campaign's buying power and ability to deliver these research-based messages to large portions of our target audiences consistently over time. In fact, the data report this year for the first time that teens are more likely to cite television commercials as a key source for anti-drug information than any other source – including, unfortunately, than their parents.

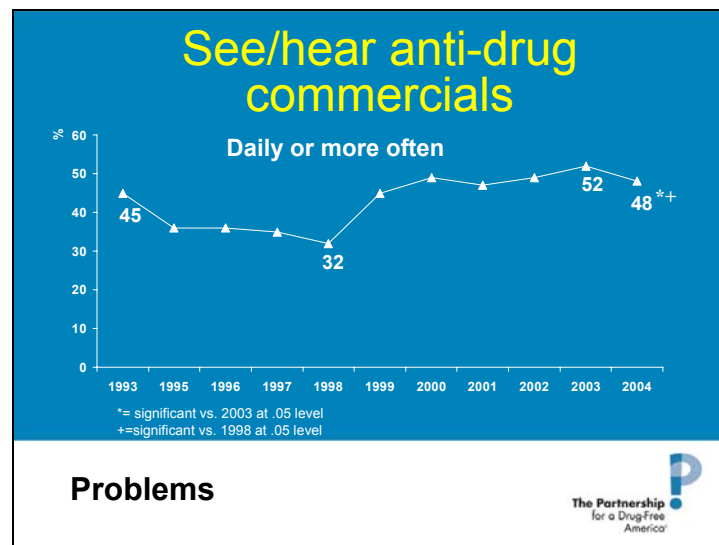


- This year’s PATS study also has another “first” to report”: **2004 was the first year the data report a decline in the number of teenagers reporting seeing or hearing anti-drug messages daily, or more frequently.** While the media campaign has endured consistent funding cuts over the past few years, the media campaign’s “match” component has helped ensure a consistently high level of exposure for campaign messages.

The media campaign has endured steady budget cuts since its launch. In 1998, it began with \$195 million and widespread bi-partisan support in the Congress. Since then, the media campaign’s budget was cut to \$185 million in 1999; \$180 million in 2000; \$175 million in 2001; \$150 million in 2003; \$145 million in 2004; and \$120 million in FY 2005. As

campaign coordinators planned the campaign's media buys around budget cuts, more of the campaign's "match" was deployed to deliver core anti-drug ads. This approach, however, has exhausted all possibilities for sustaining required media weight.

The data suggest that cuts to the campaign's budget are resulting in fewer messages reaching our target audience. This development should not surprise anyone. While we have not seen evidence of a negative impact of this on drug-related attitudes and behavior yet – in other words, shifts in drug-related attitudes and behavior – this is likely to follow if recall rates continue to decline.



Mr. Chairman, we will not find a more efficient, more effective way to reach and educate teenagers about the dangers of illicit drugs than through research-based efforts like the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. Yes, the media campaign requires significant resources, but when you consider a) the need to educate each and every generation about the dangers of drugs; b) the efficiency of the approach employed by the media campaign; and c) the competitive landscape, and what commercial advertisers are spending to reach consumers, I believe you will agree that this program is worth investing in, and investing in at higher levels than currently recommended.

**First, the need.** The need to educate teenagers about the dangers is obvious, and it is a need that is not going away. As long as we are blessed with new generations of children in the United States, we will need to educate them about the dangers of an ever-changing, even more dangerous drug landscape.

**Second, efficiency and effectiveness.** We will not find a more efficient way to educate teenagers about the dangers of drugs than through the power, influence and reach of mass media. Consider,

Mr. Chairman, that even at the restored funding level of \$145 million, the media campaign is exceptionally efficient, costing approximately \$6 per year, per teen to execute. We could spend federal resources in countless ways to educate teenagers about the dangers of drugs, and many of these are surely worthy and effective methods. We will not, however, find a more efficient and effective way to do so than through mass media.

**Finally, staying competitive requires investment** – and one that increases over time to address inflation and other factors. The commercial marketplace in America is exceptionally competitive. Those companies and concerns that are vying for the important and lucrative teen market all compete against each other, in essence, for a share of voice, a piece of the consumer mindset, for a sliver of each teen's time and attention. To breakthrough on a regular basis through mass media requires exceptional creative and exceptional messaging. But even the best, most effective advertising campaigns are meaningless unless they reach their target audience with broad reach and high frequency. This requires smart media planning and a consistent investment of resources.

Consider that every year Procter & Gamble spends well over \$1 billion on television advertising alone – marketing items like cosmetics, perfume and snack foods to American teens. The Walt Disney Company spends over \$800 million advertising its merchandise, theme parks and movies; PepsiCo spent \$740 million in 2003 to advertise its products on television; McDonald's spent \$560 million. While \$120 million is indeed a great deal of money, we face stiff competition to reach teenagers in America. We must give the media campaign an even chance to continue to produce results.

Reducing demand for illicit drugs has proven to be a remarkably effective strategy to combat drug use in America. Consider: Since 1985, the number of Americans using drugs on a regular basis is down by 30 percent. The number of Americans using cocaine on a regular basis is down by more than 70 percent. And most recently, the number of teenagers experimenting with MDMA (Ecstasy) was reduced by 25 percent since the drug peaked in 2001.

We would argue, Mr. Chairman, that the most significant factor behind these encouraging trends is changes in consumer attitudes about drugs. Drugs are still available, as our colleagues in law enforcement know. Availability does not translate into demand for products, legitimate or otherwise. Reduced numbers of Americans demanding drugs, or demonstrating a willingness to use drugs, explains why drug consumption has dropped by these levels. That's what the media campaign is all about. It's an incredibly potent and important part of our overall efforts to reduce drug use in America. We must invest more in it, not less, to realize its potential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.